

The Green Man by [reddieforlove](#)

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Summary:

Mike wakes up to Eleven missing and finds out that a conversation between her and Dustin got lost in translation.

The Green Man

Author's Note:

This is just a really short fluffy fic that I couldn't get out of my mind. It's only my second Mileven fic, and my first canon one, so I apologize if characterization is off.

Mike's first instinct when he woke up in a distinctly Eleven-less room was to panic, which really screwed with him in his half-asleep state. He didn't want to raise the alarm and wake the others and he especially didn't want to wake up Will's mom. They all decided to sleep over at the Byers house two days before Christmas, crowding into Will's room in a tangle of sleeping bags, limbs, and blankets. It was hard to tell one person from another but as he sat up and rubbed his eyes before looking around, her dark head of curls was definitely nowhere to be seen. Slowly climbing to his feet, he tiptoed out of the room and tried to keep his breathing under control. There was nothing to do for his racing heart. A thousand possibilities passed through his mind between Will's room and the living room, where a Christmas tree sat in the corner with a whole bunch of presents under it. They weren't just addressed to Will, Jonathan, or Mrs. Byers. Mike knew for a fact that there were presents for everyone in the party and Chief Hopper too. The tight feeling in his chest eased as soon as he saw El on the couch, her knees pulled to her chest and her tired eyes moving from the fireplace to the door and back.

"El," he whispered.

Her head snapped up and she watched silently as he approached, dropping onto the couch next to her.

"You scared the shit out of me," Mike muttered, running a hand through his sleep-mussed hair.

"Sorry," she said quietly, reaching over to take his other hand, weaving their fingers together without a second thought.

"What are you doing?" he asked, peering at the clock on the wall.

“It’s not even three in the morning.”

She mumbled something that Mike didn’t quite catch.

“Hmm?”

“Dustin told me about the green man,” she said.

Mike didn’t really know what to say to that but if Dustin had something to do with it, he knew that it wasn’t going to be anything good.

“The green man?” he sighed, already vowing to punch his friend in the shoulder when he woke up.

Eleven nodded, her eyes fixing on the fireplace.

“I won’t let him do it.”

Mike was starting to regret asking. He just wanted to sleep and her vague answers weren’t getting them anywhere.

“Do what?” he asked anyway.

“Steal Christmas.”

It took a moment to put it all together but suddenly it made sense.

“The Grinch?” he said, raising his eyebrows as he looked over at her.

El nodded, looking deadly serious. To be fair, that was her expression at least seventy-five percent of the time but Mike could tell that something had been lost in translation if she was out here trying to protect Christmas from a fictional character.

“You all like Christmas,” she paused, looking towards the Christmas tree. “I like it too.”

Mike couldn’t help but smile, which led to laughter bubbling up in his chest and escaping from his mouth. Eleven looked at him with a frown, clearly confused as to why he was laughing.

“What exactly did Dustin tell you?” he asked once he got himself

under control.

She launched into the basics and told him very seriously about the Grinch's heart condition. Mike was holding back laughter the whole time. Dustin must have gotten interrupted before he finished the story because all that Eleven knew was that the Grinch stole Christmas.

"It's a book, El," Mike finally said.

"A book?" she said, a small crease forming between her eyebrows.

He nodded, knowing that a copy was probably somewhere in the Byers house though he wasn't willing to look for it right now.

"Just a story," Mike assured her.

Eleven remained silent for a full minute, looking as though she was processing it.

"Oh," she finally said, turning her face away from him.

He didn't fail to notice the slight pinkness in her cheeks. She was embarrassed. Mike refused to laugh again, squeezing her hand lightly.

"The Grinch returns everyone's Christmas in the end," he said, watching her dark eyes slowly return to his. "They all end up happy. Even him."

Eleven nodded slowly, looking somewhat relieved.

"Do you wanna go back to sleep?" Mike asked, wondering if she'd even closed her eyes.

"Yes."

He stood first and she quickly followed, their hands still laced as they made their way back down the hall. Before they could enter Will's room, she stopped Mike with her free hand on his shoulder, turning him to face her.

“I heard you last year,” she said.

Mike somehow knew exactly what she was talking about. He hadn’t slept much on the night before Christmas, huddled in the fort with his radio whispering to El about how much he wished that she could just show up. He told her that he would trade away all of his presents under the tree if it meant getting her back. The fact that she heard it all made his chest ache a little.

“I’m here now,” she said.

Mike nodded, pushing away the remnants of grief to smile at her.

“I know,” he said.

She gave him a small smile before pushing up to press a quick kiss to his lips that left them tingling. Then they made their way back into the middle of their friends and laid down with Eleven between him and Max. They fell asleep with their hands still clasped and woke up in the morning to a house still full of Christmas. Mike decided not to follow through on his promise and didn’t slug Dustin in the arm, though he did tell him not to stop in the middle of a story ever again, and to actually tell El when it was a story and not real life. When she smiled at him over a stack of waffles with whipped cream and chocolate chips, Mike suddenly found that he could identify with the Grinch. No matter how disgustingly cheesy it sounded, he definitely felt like his heart grew three sizes every time he looked at her and remembered that she was back for good.

Author's Note:

I would love to hear what you think!